



CITY OF
CHARLES
STURT

City of Charles Sturt
72 Woodville Road
Woodville
South Australia 5011
PO Box 1 Woodville
South Australia 5011
Phone 08 8408 1111
Facsimile 08 8408 1122
www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au

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Ms Jeanette Radcliffe
Committee Secretary
Senate Rural & Regional Affairs & Transport Committee
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Radcliffe

Inquiry into the Airports Amendment Bill 2006

Thank you for affording the City of Charles Sturt the opportunity to provide a submission on the proposed amendments to the Airports Act 1996.

The City of Charles Sturt, population 104,000, is located in the Adelaide metropolitan area and our boundaries abut the north-western boundary of the Adelaide Airport. Aircraft servicing regional South Australia have their flight path across our City; the land provided for a possible third runway is also within our boundary. So, our community has a keen interest in the operations of, and development at, Adelaide Airport.

While our submission will mainly focus upon those matters directly impacting on our community, we will comment upon wider social, environmental and community issues associated with the impact of airports generally.

From the outset, we commend a recent article from Urban Policy and Research, entitled "Fly Buy Cities: Some Planning Aspects of Airport Privatisation in Australia" - Freestone et al (Vol 24/4 - December 2006). Its summary of the main difficulties confronting local communities regarding the planning aspects of non-aeronautical commercial development of major airports in Australia is a balanced one, in our view.

As indicated, while the Adelaide Airport does not lie within the boundaries of the City of Charles Sturt, residents are affected by aviation noise and the traffic infrastructure as well as numerous other impacts of physical development on the airport site. Accordingly, we are supportive of any proposed amendments which will help ensure the community and local planning authorities are provided with improved data in regard to aircraft noise exposure levels. This would seem to be an improvement, particularly the consultative measures.

However, an increasingly difficult matter for Council is non-aeronautical commercial development at the site and the perceived rather nonchalant attitude of the Adelaide Airport operators to Council and community concerns. The most recent example of this is a proposal to locate a supermarket on the western boundary of the airport.

One could be forgiven for believing that the Airport operators regard this proposal as a fait accompli and given past experience they may well be correct in such an assumption. Some would regard the consultation that has occurred as little more than tokenism. This of course highlights the problems of the poor planning regime that exists, and more particularly, one that is insensitive to State and Local planning requirements and local community needs.

So our primary position on this aspect of the amendments is that the opportunity should be taken to achieve better integrated planning and development across the system. It seems to us that while integrated planning is somewhat of a mantra for urban development generally we do not follow suit for those areas in and around airports.

As the proposition stands, the amendments do not adequately recognise and incorporate State and Local Authorities in the development assessment process. Indeed, it further reinforces the exclusion of Council in the consultation process and is not supported. Incorporation of these planning authorities in the assessment process for developments on airport land would facilitate the intent of the legislation changes to have regard for and be compatible with adjoining land uses to the airport.

The proposed reduced public consultation timeframes, and increase in construction cost threshold for major development plans will further reduce the ability of the public and government agencies to scrutinise the proposals to ensure consistency with the master plans. More importantly it negates the opportunity to consider the impacts of the proposed variations of major development plans and specific developments on the surrounding businesses. This will only increase the Airport lessee autonomy with regards land use development and reduce the opportunity for collaboration in growing the overall economic prosperity of the community.

We acknowledge the proposed amendments in the Airports Amendment Bill 2006 do require the airport managers to have regard to the area outside the airport to reduce the potential for conflict between incompatible uses and the need to demonstrate how airports have regard for public comment during the master planning and major development plan process. These are seen as positive steps towards better integration of the two planning frameworks. But further amendments are required to ensure that proposed developments on airport land provide the appropriate level of justification, investigation and scrutiny as required by other developments subject to State legislation.

We are not supportive of the suggested increase in the construction cost threshold for requiring major development plans to be raised from \$10 million to \$20 million. While acknowledging some of the rationale, the change has more of a feel of avoiding an open and transparent process. Indeed, it has all the hallmarks of trying to circumvent the need for a comprehensive public consultation.

The aforementioned "Freestone et al" article discusses the issues and concerns of non-aeronautical development in detail. Most of the assessment is consistent with our findings so we offer no further comment. But, we stress we do not oppose limited and sensitive development. One would hope that Adelaide Airport could be viewed with pride by the community as a contemporary aeronautical facility with some commercial development rather than a series of major shopping malls with a runway, as it seems to be the current trend.

But, at the end of the day, the key issue is the low key Commonwealth planning framework in which this public policy operates and the negative consequences for the community, in particular, we express concern with the lack of congruence across Commonwealth, State and Local planning regimes in circumstances where airport operators, unlike other commercial entities, are legally excused from making contributions towards the upgrading of the surrounding infrastructure.

If we were asked to propose an ideal outcome from this consultation, we would seek:

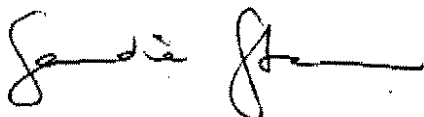
- Airport Master Plan reviews and upgrades, particularly in relation to linking strategic plans for the Adelaide Airport with the Adelaide Metropolitan Planning Strategy with adequate consultation;
- greater involvement, consistency and integration between airport development policies and assessment with the State system;
- an improved consultation process involving airport operators, the State, Local Government and the community;
- provision for the referral of an application for proposed airport developments to an independent assessment body, for example a Federal Development Assessment Commission, to approve, with or without conditions, or refuse the application;
- appeal mechanisms for both the airport as an applicant for development approval and a third party, being an aggrieved member of the public; and
- retaining the financial threshold for major development to the current level viz \$10 million.

In the main, this proposition is supportive of the position of our neighbours, the City of West Torrens

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting upon the proposed Airport Amendment Bill 2006. Council supports the need for open and transparent consultation; it is also willing to have representors appear before the Committee, if that is desired.

Should you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or Council's Acting Manager Planning & Development, Ron Green, telephone 8408 1189.

Yours sincerely



SANDIE STARR
ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

cc Mr S Georganas MP, Federal Member for Hindmarsh
Mr R Sawford MP, Federal Member for Port Adelaide
Hon P Caica MP, State Member for Colton
Ms B Halliday, Executive Director, Planning SA
Ms W Campana, Executive Director, LGA of SA
Mr A Hrast, Director, Transport Policy, ALGA
Mr S Moseley, Acting Chief Executive, City of Adelaide
Mr T Starr, Chief Executive, City of West Torrens
Mr R Donaldson, Chief Executive, City of Holdfast Bay
Hon P Holloway MLC, Minister for Urban Development & Planning
Mayor Harold Anderson, City of Charles Sturt
Council Members, City of Charles Sturt